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## A White Guy Watches Alpha Ya Ya Diallo and His Bafing Riders Perform at the Local Arts Center

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## A White Guy Watches Alpha Ya Ya Diallo and His Bafing Riders Perform at the Local Arts Center

Jason Snart

That white guy – okay, to be perfectly honest,  
is me, spraddle-legged in a velvet  
balcony seat, watching Guinean Diallo  
perform for fifty, maybe a hundred  
or so suburban folks all nodding along  
to songs about love, and panic,  
and freedom.

At the break  
I consider a glass of wine, but  
run into Felipe, a colleague  
who teaches Spanish and Psych. He asks,  
do I know what the drum  
is called, the drum that's been giving  
up six beats against  
Diallo's four: *a jembe*,  
he says. Oh, with a d: *djembe*.  
A crossword word  
I've run into.

*My daughter and I*, says Felipe,  
*like to jam*. And he hooks the air  
with his fingers, conditioning "jam."  
*She plays her little drum and I play*  
*the big drum. And this is my friend*,  
he says, of the man who's walked up,  
*he's headed to Africa*  
*in two weeks*.

*In two weeks*  
*I'll be there*. He rolls his eyes  
when I mention the flight. *I waste a day in Paris*,  
*then four and half hours*  
*to the Senegal coast*.

The lights dim,  
like a guy with a trick knee  
that gives way a bit,  
so Felipe and his friend  
head back inside and I'm off  
to the balcony where I sit and look down  
at the djembe, waiting  
for something to happen.

## Aloneliness

Kristina Noel Kroger

a green pane of glass, green, green, wine-bottle green  
hugs me close—I'm getting drunk on the loneliness.  
This sweet, sloshing, burning liquid

Stumbling bumbling in a neon night, hedonism at its finest  
sweet pleasures like peaches on my tongue  
flesh rises before me, but I am alone

smoky wind, red moon, winking city, laughing  
the coyote with the green fire in its eyes  
is the mystery in the dark alley

Ah, metropolis of sin,  
I walk your shadowed avenues  
giggling with my shadow